



**U.S. PROBATION OFFICE  
DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 2009-01**

**Position Title: U.S. PROBATION OFFICER**

The U.S. Probation Office for the District of Puerto Rico is seeking fully bilingual (**ENGLISH & SPANISH**) candidates for U.S. Probation Officer as follows:

**Annual Salary Range:** CL25/01 - CL 25/61 (\$33,154 - \$53,074) annual base salary (Table A1), plus Cost of Living Allowance, with a Growth Potential to CL28/01 - CL28/61 (Table 00) (subject to changes). The above-stated classifications are subject to candidates qualifications.

**Number of Vacancies:** More than one full-time position may be filled.

**Closing Date:** Open until filled.

**Qualification Standards:** The incumbent conducts pretrial bail investigations, presentence investigations, provides recommendations to the court, and supervises offenders. He/She must:

- ✓ Have good knowledge of court operations and functions
- ✓ Fluency in English and Spanish languages (written, oral and translation)
- ✓ Knowledge in the use of Windows, Corel WordPerfect (desirable), MS-WORD, and computer literacy
- ✓ Skill in typing is not required but preferable
- ✓ Possess valid driver's license and vehicle
- ✓ Availability to work irregular hours (nights & weekends)

**Main Duties:** Please refer to attached job description.

**Requirements:** Must possess a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in a field of academic study, such as criminal justice, criminology, psychology, sociology, human relations, social work, or counseling. Experience as a police, custodial or security officer, other than criminal investigation experience, is not creditable. In addition, one year of specialized experience equivalent to work at the next lower grade is required. Specialized experience is defined as that gained after completion of a Bachelor's Degree, in such fields as probation, pretrial services, parole, corrections, criminal investigation, and substance/addiction treatment work. A Master's Degree in a field of study closely related, equates to two years of specialized experience.

**Medical Requirements and Maximum Entry Age:** Prior to appointment, the selectee considered for this position will undergo a medical examination and drug screening. Upon successful completion of the medical examination and drug screening, the selectee may then be appointed provisionally, pending a favorable suitability determination by the court. In addition, as conditions of employment, incumbent will be subject to ongoing random drug screening, updated background investigations every five years and, as deemed necessary by management for reasonable cause, may be subject to subsequent fitness-for-duty evaluations. The medical requirements and the essential job functions derived from the medical guidelines for probation officers, pretrial services officers and officer assistants are available for public review at <http://www.uscourts.gov/>. First-time appointees to positions covered under law enforcement officer retirement provisions must not have reached their 37<sup>th</sup> birthday at the time of the appointment, (Title 5, U.S.C. Chapters 83 & 85). Applicants, age 37 or over who have previous law enforcement officer experience under Civil Retirement System or the Federal Employees' Retirement System and who have either a subsequent break in service or intervening service in a non-law enforcement officer position may

The preparation of such reports requires interviewing offenders and their families, investigating the offense, prior record and financial status of the offender, and contacting law enforcement agencies, attorneys, victims of the crimes, schools, churches, and civic organizations. The purpose of these activities is to ascertain the offender's background, to assess the probability of future criminal behavior

and determine profit from the offense, restitution, and the offender's ability to pay fines and costs of prosecution, incarceration and cost of supervision. An integral part of this process is the interpretation and application of the U.S. Sentencing Commission guidelines and relevant case law.

Selectee testifies in court as to the basis for factual findings and guideline applications. Serves as resource to the court to facilitate proper imposition of sentence.

Maintains personal contact with offenders through office and community visits and by telephone. Investigates employment, sources of income, life style and associates to assess risk and compliance. Responsible for detection of substance abuse and through assessment and counseling. Implements the necessary treatment or violation proceedings of appropriate offenders. Refers offenders to appropriate outside agencies such as medical and drug treatment facilities, employment and training.

Initiates contacts with, replies to and seeks information from organizations and persons such as the U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, and attorneys concerning offenders' behavior and conditions of supervision. Detects and investigates violations and implements appropriate alternatives and sanctions. Reports violations of the conditions of supervision to the appropriate authorities. Prepares reports, which may include application of U.S. Sentencing Commission revocation guidelines. Makes recommendations for disposition. Testifies at court or parole hearings. Conducts preliminary interviews and other investigations as required. Maintains a detailed written record of case activity.

### **Factor 1 - Required Competencies (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities):**

#### Probation, Pretrial Services and Law Enforcement

Broad knowledge of criminal justice system. Knowledge of the roles and functions of the federal probation and/or pretrial services offices, including knowledge of the legal requirements, practices, and procedures used in probation, parole, and/or pretrial services. Knowledge of sentencing guidelines and applicable case law. Thorough knowledge of investigative and supervision techniques. Good knowledge of the roles, responsibilities and relationships among the federal courts, Parole Commission, US Marshals Service, Bureau of Prisons, US Attorneys Office, Federal Public Defenders Office, and other organizations.

Knowledge of how other judicial processes and procedures relate to the officer's roles and responsibilities. Knowledge of federal law and the criminal justice system particularly as it relates to federal pretrial services, probation and parole policies and procedures. Broad knowledge of surrounding community and available community resources.

Knowledge of automated/internet resources and systems available for conducting background checks, criminal histories, and other similar information (such as the National Crime Information Center).

Ability to work with law enforcement agencies at different governmental levels, community service providers, and all courts. Skill in applying various statutes and implementing regulations. Ability to communicate orally and in writing with a variety of persons such as judicial officers, attorneys and defendants/offenders. Ability to interview and investigate defendants/offenders from various backgrounds, their families and others in the community to obtain the information needed.

Knowledge of investigative techniques and skill in investigating offenders'/defendants' backgrounds, activities, finances and determining legitimacy of their income.

Knowledge of the Bail Reform Act. Knowledge of negotiation and motivation techniques.

Knowledge of sentencing guidelines, statutes, *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure* and applicable case law. Knowledge of changes in the law. Knowledge of techniques in supervising offenders/defendants. Skill in supervising offenders/defendants, risk assessment, and developing appropriate alternatives and sanctions to non-compliant behavior. Skill in counseling defendants/offenders to obtain and maintain compliance to the conditions of their release. Ability to discern deception and act accordingly.

Knowledge of legal terminology. Skill in determining conducting legal research related to varied complex and difficult legal issues related to sentencing and supervision. Skill in analyzing and summarizing legal concepts and issues. Skill in legal reasoning and critical thinking. Skill in dealing with violent and/or difficult people.

Skill in evaluating and applying sentencing guidelines. Ability to follow safety procedures. Ability to compile and summarize information (such as background checks and criminal histories) within established time-frames.

Ability to organize, prioritize work schedule, work independently with little or no supervision, and to exercise discretion. Ability to work under pressure of short deadlines.

#### Written and Oral Communication/Interaction

Skill in communicating (orally and in writing) and working with judges, attorneys, other law enforcement agencies, and correctional agencies. Ability to interact and communicate effectively (orally and in writing) with people of diverse backgrounds, including law enforcement and collateral agency personnel at different government levels, community service providers, and offenders/defendants. Ability to interview and establish rapport with contacts at collateral agencies, offenders/defendants and their families/support systems, and others for the purpose of supervision and investigation.

#### Information Technology and Automation

Skill in the use of automated equipment including mobile devices, word processing, spreadsheet, and database applications, and various other types of software. Ability to utilize computer software and automated systems to perform record checks, record urinalysis results, compile criminal history information, and similar activities. Skill in interpreting and analyzing data from a variety of investigative databases.

### **Factor 2 - Primary Job Focus and Scope:**

The primary focus of the job is to fulfill statutory requirements to conduct pretrial and pre-sentence investigations, supervise offenders/defendants, make recommendations to the court, evaluate needs and conditions and maximize compliance for the purpose of ensuring community safety. The incumbent's work assists the court in making release or detention decisions and sentencing determinations. A proper recommendation to the court minimizes the number of persons incarcerated while maximizing the protection of the public. Incumbent's supervision of offenders/defendants has direct impact on the safety of the community, the rehabilitation of the offender/defendant and the restitution of the victim. Society benefits from successful supervision and the use of detention alternatives by saving the costs of incarceration. Often the offender/defendant completes the conditions of supervision and becomes a productive member of the community.

**Factor 3 - Complexity and Decision Making:**

This job involves making independent decisions within the context of professional standards, broad policies, and general goals. Probation/pretrial services officers at this level gather and analyze information to determine or recommend the best course of action. Preparing presentence reports is a complicated process which includes gathering and analyzing information and formulating a recommendation. Interpreting and applying the sentencing guidelines is very complex. Changes in legislation and case law require continual updating of procedures. Supervising offenders/defendants is difficult. Identifying relevant supervision issues, developing a plan to address the issues and implementing the appropriate plan is a complex process. Staying abreast of available community resources and their referral requirements and procedures also is difficult. Supervising offenders/defendants with substance abuse, physical or mental problems and those convicted of sophisticated financial crimes is difficult. These duties are increased in difficulty when offenders/defendants are being deceitful of the incumbent and others.

**Factor 4A - Interactions with Judiciary Contacts:**

The primary judiciary contacts are other probation/pretrial services staff, judicial officers and staff of other court units for the purpose of conducting investigations, and maintaining accurate and up-to-date information in case files.

**Factor 4B - Interactions with External Contacts:**

The primary external contacts are offenders/defendants and their families, other government agencies, US Attorneys Office, US Marshals, Bureau of Prisons, Parole Commission, attorneys, public safety/law enforcement officials, treatment providers, victims, and other members of the community for the purpose of investigating offenders'/defendants' backgrounds, obtaining and verifying arrest information, drafting sentencing guidelines, and similar activities.

**Factor 4C - Work Parameters:**

The procedures are established and the supervisor is available for discussion of unusual problems. However, frequently critical case decisions are made in the community without access to supervisory guidance. The incumbent usually schedules and completes the work independently, ensuring that required deadlines are met. Completed work, such as presentence reports and supervision plans, is reviewed by the supervisor. Judgment and experience are applied in making decisions, in addition to use of written guides and manuals.

**Factor 5 - Work Environment and Physical Demands:**

Work is performed in an office setting and in the community and may be subject to variable hours, including nights and weekends. Work requires regular contact with persons who have violent backgrounds. These contacts may be made in both generally controlled office settings as well as in field situations (such as uncontrolled and unsafe neighborhoods/environments where illegal activities and violence may occur).